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STATE FOR AF/PD PEHRNMAN AND IIP/AF CBERGIN

STATE ALSO FOR ECA ACROSS, MKIRSH, AND DYOUNG

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: BHM CELEBRATIONS DRAW HUNDREDS OF TANZANIANS

REFTEL A: State 21427

B: 08 State 123909

C: 08 State 112714

¶1. SUMMARY: In celebration of Black History Month (BHM), Dar es Salaam's Public Affairs Section organized activities around "Nonviolent Civil Rights Movements in the United States" (Ref B). We selected this theme to advance our MSP goal of "Governing Justly and Democratically." Tanzania will hold national elections in late 2010, and citizens hope to see elections more free and fair than in the past, especially on the semi-autonomous isles of Zanzibar. PAS hosted a PA/OBS film showing and discussion of the President's biography "Barack Obama"; offered two discussions (moderated by an EMBOFF) featuring speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. on video; held a program in conjunction with a visiting Citizen Exchange for women artists; and hosted a jazz concert by visiting Navy band "Top Brass" at the PAO residence. All events were supported by IIP pamphlets, articles, paper shows, web postings, and mission press and photo releases. Media coverage of our various events was excellent. END SUMMARY.

Obama and MLK Stories Inspire Audiences

¶2. On February 10, BHM events were launched with a personal presentation and 30-minute video entitled "Great Speeches: Martin Luther King Jr" followed by a Q&A session with a second-tour Pol/Econ junior officer. Forty-two students and teachers from Al-Muntazir Islamic Seminary and Shaaban Robert Secondary School asked Poloff Randall Robinson insightful questions, including, "Has Martin Luther King's dream been realized by the election of President Obama?" The students reported their motivation to advocate for peace after listening to Martin Luther King's call for non-violence. The successful program was repeated on February 26 for 50 Education-USA undergraduate and graduate clients of the Educational Advising Center.

¶3. On February 18, we organized a program in conjunction with a visiting Citizen Exchange (CE) Program of women artists from Ohio. Two Tanzanian CE alumni helped organize the event during which two artists gave a presentation entitled "The Underground Railroad Laid Roots for Artists." AmCit CE participant Stephanie Matthews, an African-American photographer, shared her inspiring personal story and her focus on fine art, dance/movements photojournalism, and showed her artful photographs to a captivated audience.

¶4. CE participant Joan Edwards discussed her twenty-five years of quilting experience with the Black Swamp Quilters Guild of Ohio. Edwards engaged the audience by explaining what different quilt patterns meant to African American slaves, and how those patterns helped slaves to escape along the Underground Railroad. The capacity crowd included Tanzanian female artists selected to participate in an upcoming Citizen Exchange, ECA Alumni, Fine Arts professors, teachers and journalists. The CE group of six Americans visited Tanzania February 10-27 to conduct professional arts and women's issues workshops, exhibit their artwork in joint exhibitions, and select eight women artists who will visit Ohio in

April for a 28-day CE program.

¶5. January's inauguration of President Obama lent BHM special significance this year. On February 24, we showed the PA/OBS biography "Barack Obama" (Ref C) followed by a moderated discussion by Poloff. After the video, participants that included 50 journalists, NGO and civil society representatives commented emotionally on President Obama's inspiring story. ECA alumni in the audience requested follow-up programs outside the Embassy to offer more Tanzanians the opportunity to see the biography. One attendee noted, "I wish I could see more forums like this one to continue the legacy of the community development President Barack Obama had shown in Chicago." The eager audiences have encouraged us to continue hosting moderated Obama biography showings throughout March outside of Dar es Salaam.

¶6. On February 26, ECA alumni, NGO members, media, visiting ECA Alumni Coordinator for AF Mallory Kirsh, and other guests convened at PAO's residence to listen to a Black History Month jazz concert. The "Top Brass" Naval Band, which was visiting Tanzania with the USS Robert G. Bradley's training and partnership mission, played traditional jazz and other favorites in line with the BHM theme. Poster shows traditionally used for April's Jazz Appreciation Month decorated the residence. Post also hosted video and photos of the band's performances on our website.

¶7. Throughout February, we distributed over 360 BHM-related handouts. BHM activities were supported by the following IIP paper shows at the Embassy and PAO's residence:

- When the spirit moves: African American Dance in History and Art
- Duke Ellington Remembered
- Louis Armstrong
- New Visions: African American Artists
- Generation of Change: Legacy of Martin Luther King

Various IIP and other brochures, articles and publications were given to the audience to support the programs, including:

- African-American History Month - IIP Pamphlet
- The Civil Rights Movements and the Legacy of Martin Luther King IIP - IIP pamphlet
- Martin Luther King, Jr: a man who changed things - Houghton Mifflin elementary readers acquired by PAS through donation
- America's Quilting History African American Quilting: A Long Rich Heritage (article retrieved by IRC)
- America's Quilting History Underground Railroad Quilts & Abolitionist Fairs (article retrieved by IRC)
- Underground Railroad Quilt Code (article retrieved by IRC)

¶8. Media coverage: Our BHM events were also supported by two press releases. The first produced a story in "The African" (English daily; circulation 5,000) on February 13, 2008 entitled "United States celebrates Black History." Reporting on our BHM was also carried by East African Radio, Clouds Radio and Radio One (ensuring nation-wide coverage heard by several millions). A second press release covering the Citizen Exchange's events, including their BHM presentation, generated television and radio coverage on ITV, Radio One, TBC 1, Clouds FM, Radio Kheri, Radio Quran, Radio Free Africa, Star TV, Channel TEN and East African Radio and Star TV-Tanga, as well as the following print articles:

- The African, February 7, "U.S. Women artists to conduct art workshops in Dar"
- This Day (English daily; circulation 10,000), February 7, "U.S. women artist to Tour Dar"
- This Day, February 14, "United States Women artists visiting Tanzania"
- The Citizen (English daily; circulation 7,500), February 23, "U.S. artistes (sic) call for cooperation."

¶9. Results and Comment: Over 200 Tanzanians, including many ECA alumni, attended BHM programs held in the Embassy during February, and an additional 50 guests attended our jazz concert. Many gave positive comments about the various programs. Attendees asked for similar programs to be held more often. Per Ref A, PAO visited the Dar es Salaam School of Journalism March 13 and spoke with (and listened to) 75 journalism students about Obama's foreign policy and educational opportunities in the U.S. We will continue to pursue opportunities offered by the inauguration of President Obama and

invite members of our target audiences to share their ideas for increased mutual understanding with the United States. End Comment.

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